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THE FIRE OF GOD'S ANGER:

OR

Light from the Old Testament upon the New Testament teaching concerning Future Punishment, *by L. C. BAKER.*

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THE BEST SOLUTION.

The mystery of man's destiny, and of the punishment that awaits him on account of sin, is beyond human solution. Born into the world with a sinful nature, and subject to death, the wages of sin, the question of what is to become of him under the economy of a just and merciful God is indeed a painful one. The theory that every man is a free moral agent, endowed with a capacity for virtue and holiness by the Spirit of God freely

bestowed upon all, and that therefore every man has power to determine his own destiny, breaks down in view of the fact that the natural corruption of the human heart in the vast majority of cases proves too strong for this assumed moral strength. If this be the divine system of the world, all we can say is that under it there are few that be saved. And the difficulty remains of supposing that under the economy of a wise and good God there could be such meagre results.

Scripture alone has solved this mystery. But all men have not eyes to see it. Strange to say, the greatest barrier to their perceiving it has been found in the words of Him who of all other men had the best right to speak for God, and who knew most of the profound secret of man's being and destiny. On the surface of Jesus' words there seems to lie the doctrine of the everlasting punishment in the fire of hell of all unrighteous men who do not in this life bridle their lusts, and in whom there is not found that love of God and of their fellow-men which is the fulfilling of the law. Other parts of His teaching seem to be inconsistent with this. He speaks of the far-reaching forgiveness of the Heavenly Father, reaching to seventy times seven. He hints of a possible forgiveness in the world to come. (Matt. xii. 32.) He tell of His love for the one lost sheep and for the prodigal son. He prays for His murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When we turn to the sermons and letters of the Apostles we find them silent on this doctrine of eternal torment in hell. Not a word of theirs would have been construed to teach it, unless there were a previous necessity of

bringing their allusions to this subject into harmony with their Master's words. The strong presumption, therefore, is that they did not understand these words as we have done. Moreover, there has been a growing conviction in the hearts of all good men, and especially in those in whom Christ dwells, that the surface meaning of these words does not consist with the deepest meaning of this mystery of Christ, nor with the deepest purpose of our Father God in this system of the world, of whom are all things, and for whom are all things, and who in Christ is reconciling and subduing all things unto Himself. Nor is it consistent with that love to all men—that compassion for the ignorant and for them that are out of the way, and that sacrifice of self to rescue and save them, which most of all proves that Christ is being formed in us.

Hence, there has been from the first an irrepressible desire to solve this mystery, and to reconcile these apparently diverse views of the character and purposes of God. And never in any age of the Church has this desire been so intense as in our own. And never has the need been more pressing that some solution be found.

Most professed Christians, even though their judgments refuse to approve and their hearts revolt, still give a formal and technical assent to the old doctrine of eternal punishment, because they believe they must take their choice between it and the denial of their Saviour's words. In such an issue no true Christian can long hesitate. Many, however, have found their way out of the difficulty by one or the other of these three paths:

1. By pressing the redemptive side of Scripture teach-

ing beyond its full proportions, so as to make the promised restitution of all things to include the salvation to eternal life and glory of all men.

2. By the doctrine of a probation continued beyond this life in an intermediate state to all who have not in this life been decisively tested by the Gospel.

3. By the view that man by sin has forfeited the right to live forever, if he ever had it, and that eternal life is given only to those who in this life receive power to become the sons of God. All others, if not at the first death, then at the second, are, after adequate punishment, eternally destroyed.

In each of these there is an element of truth, but not the full truth. The first is true in that it finds a doctrine of ultimate restitution imbedded in all Scripture, and in that no other view of the economy of God satisfies these Scriptures, or is consistent with His character, than one which leaves all things reconciled to Him and God all in all. But its mistake has been in lowering human responsibility under this system, and in weakenin the force of those Scriptures which teach that men may by their sin and folly lose their estate in life under this system and be destroyed out of it. The second is true in so far as it claims that no man can lose life forever under the economy of the just and merciful Giver of it, with no knowledge of the gracious provision He has made to save it. Its mistake is in supposing that the provision to bring all men within the scope and under the test of this knowledge sets aside or postpones the operation of the universal law that the wages of sin is death. Hence it supposes an intermediate state before

this law against the sinner becomes operative, and a continued probation. Whereas, Scripture knows nothing of any such suspension of sentence. It is only after judgment has been visited and the sentence executed, that the grace of God has provided to take up again the case of lost men through their resurrection from the dead.

The third solution, that of conditional immortality comes the nearest to the truth, and of the three is best sustained by Scripture. We have noticed before in these pages how the best Christian thought of our times seems settling in this direction. We found it, perhaps not openly avowed, but inwrought into all the fibre of Prof. Drummond's able argument on "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." We found it still more plainly suggested in Prof. Harris' recent work on theology and in Prebendary Row's treatise on "Future Retribution." These writers, however, go no farther than to express a conviction that no life alienated from God's life can have in it the elements of immortality, but that it must ultimately vanish away. And this is as far as we can go with this school. With the theodicy of many of its advocates, which supposes either that the unjust have no resurrection, or only such a one as will give them opportunity for trial and judgment and punishment, ending in their eternal destruction, we have no sympathy. We cannot conceive that God would provide to bring up again out of death, the penalty of sin, the countless generations of men who have died in their sins merely for the purpose of re-enacting a judgment already rendered and of killing them a second time. Such a view of His purpose in resurrection has no warrant in Scripture,

and is contradicted by the very idea of death as the wages of sin, and of resurrection as a recovery out of death.

The true solution of this mystery lies therefore in the doctrine that resurrection from the dead belongs not on the retributive, but essentially on the redemptive side of God's working in the economy of creation and redemption. All His creative processes, so far as they forecast this crowning miracle of man's re-creation, show that it must be a *renewal* of his life, and not a perpetual blight and degradation of it. And all Scripture places it on the side of God's beneficent and restoring work. The sentence against him for sin was that he should die. And in the mysterious organism of the race, as constituting one stock, the sin of the one man made the many sinners, and judgment passed upon all men. Death has reigned over all. A few now, a first fruits company, enter into life through this gateway of death. But the vast majority of men go down as captives into its prison-house. The Old Testament name for this region of gloom and silence was "sheol." The righteous man had hope in his death that God would save his soul alive, and redeem him from going down into this pit. But for none of the countless multitudes gathered there was this a place of new trial, or for any of the activities of life. It was the place of penalty, where men suffered that death-sentence which God at first pronounced against sin. The words of Jesus made it plain that the soul did not pass at once into unconsciousness with the death of the body, but suffering and even torment awaited it there, and a bondage in death deepened and prolonged according to its deserts.

But over all this sad wreck of the human race and this great gulf of despair the light of a resurrection hope began to dawn. Even to Adam the promise came, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." And the later Scriptures expand this promise until even the Gentiles are blessed with the brightness of its rising. The Jews, indeed, believed that this resurrection out of death was their own peculiar blessing. But the prophets plainly intimated that, as they had proven themselves unworthy and as wicked as their heathen neighbors, so this mercy of God would reach them also. Egypt and Assyria would be blessed with Israel in the latter days (Is. xix., 23-25). Moab and Ammon would be restored from their captivity (Jer. xlviii., 47–xlvix., 6). Israel, when restored to her former estate, should receive also Sodom and Samaria as her former sisters in iniquity, and as now sharing in her redemption (Ezek. xvi., 53-63). All generations were to share in the blessings of Messiah's deliverance. All they that go down to the dust were to bow before Him ;—even he that cannot keep his soul alive (Ps. xxii., 27-31, R.V.). What do all these promises imply, except they convey the promise of a resurrection of these "kindreds of the earth" from the dead? How otherwise could they be fulfilled? In what other way could the great germinal promise that in Abraham's seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, be verified?

With this key in hand, that it was the purpose of God from the first to bring salvation to all mankind from the pit of death and hell, into which it was cast by the sin of Adam, the whole of Scripture is made plain. To this

end a Saviour was provided who should taste death for every man, giving Himself a ransom for all. To this extent Universalism is true. All were to be rescued by the obedience of one man from the abyss of death into which they fell through the disobedience of one (Rom. v., 12-20). This subsequent gift of life must be of the same order as that which was at first conferred and forfeited. It cannot be eternal life. For such dignity is bestowed only upon those who are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. But it is another standing and estate in life conferred through Christ upon all who died in Adam, and to reach every man in his own time and order.

Premising that this was the promise made unto the fathers which Jesus came to confirm, it is easy to see that all His words about retribution must be read in reference to it, and that they all acquire a different meaning from that which tradition has fixed to them. And we at once see why the apostles never attached to them this traditional meaning. *These words relate to the destruction that overhangs men, and which must be visited upon the wicked before resurrection.* When He speaks, for example, about the sacrifice, if need be, of one or more of our members, rather than that the whole body be cast into hell, the danger referred to is loss of this *present* embodied life. And as this includes also the "soul," He warns men that it may also be destroyed with the body in hell. This yawning pit of torment and destruction was something near and impending. What awaits man beyond the resurrection is not here in view. And so with the judgment of Matt. xxv. These gathered na-

tions were not men risen from the dead; nor was the casting into eternal fire for an eternal punishment to to take place after the resurrection. This idea has all to be first read into the passage before it can be read out of it. The judgment was to begin before that generation passed away. All the nations of mankind were to pass in review before the judgment-seat of the Son of Man. Those living on the earth at the time of the open manifestation of His glory shall in a special way be the subjects of it. But the whole scene, like that described by St. Paul in I. Thess. v, lies this side of resurrection. When men of the earth are crying "peace and safety" then this sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape; but if this be a pre-resurrection judgment, the punishment must be also pre-resurrection. The eternal fire must consume men before that event, as it did the men of Sodom (Jude 7). The eternal *kolasis*—cutting-off—into which the wicked depart, must precede their resurrection and be bounded by it. And this accords with all we know of the prevailing ideas of the Jews at that time. They never looked upon resurrection in any other light than as a deliverance,—never as an introduction to deeper despair. For this reason they generally believed that the wicked never would be raised. And their idea of "eternal" punishment was never that of a punishment that would transcend the bounds of resurrection. For this was essentially deliverance from sheol, or as the later Rabbis conceived it, gehenna, the place and state of punishment. All Jesus' words, therefore, about man's future punishment are necessarily limited by, and to be explained in the light of, His pur-

pose to raise all men from the dead. Only once in His teaching does He clearly announce it to be His purpose to raise even "them that have done evil" (John v.. 29). Theirs, indeed, was to be a "resurrection of judgment." They must remain still under connemnation, and exposed to the hazards of a second death. But He expressly declares in this connection that the reason the Father had put all judgment into His hands, and given Him power to raise the dead, was that all men might honor the Son even as they honor the Father (vs 22-23). He was to bring even the dead under His judicial administration as the Son of Man. We are to recognize, however, that the full results of His triumph over death and spoliation of its realms were only thus alluded to in our Lord's teaching. They were not fully unfolded because even his disciples were not prepared to understand them until after His own resurrection from the dead. Hence the severe words of Jesus about retribution stand in His teaching unrelieved by this modification, because the time for it had not yet come. And this explains why the apostles, enlightened by the Holy Ghost to perceive the meaning of His death and resurrection, nowhere repeat in their nakedness these words of Jesus about the fire of hell. They were now illumined from the other side of His triumph over death and hell. Their views of the scope of that triumph grew larger, the more they realized its magnitude, and its relation to the whole human race, and to God's great plan of the ages. And yet they by no means speak lightly of the present peril overhanging sinful men. Like their Master, they warned them of the destruction awaiting them in death and be-

yond it. "Whose end is destruction" was their constant testimony concerning all evil-doers. But they never conceived of this destruction as visited upon them after, and by means of, a resurrection from the dead. It was the wreck of manhood, and the loss of its hold and heritage of life before that rescue.

The doctrine then of an universal redemption of mankind from death through a resurrection to reach all, each in his own time and order, furnishes the true solution of this mystery, because it makes room for both sides of Scripture teaching, the retributive and redemptive. It shows how God's word is made good that blessing is secured to all mankind through a Messiah, who was raised from the dead to be the Lord of both the dead and the living. It shows how neither sin nor death have been able to defeat God's purpose or annul His promise. And on the other hand it makes room for the verification of all His righteous judgments, and for the display of His fierce wrath against sin. For while His grace has provided to save the righteous from death and to preserve his soul alive, the sinner must sink into this pit of destruction, and go into outer darkness, a naked spirit, with the loss of both body and soul. This loss and destruction of his embodied life must be accompanied with whatever remorse and anguish his sins deserve. And the depth and duration of his captivity in hell must be meted out by the same law. And his resurrection is not "of life." Life, purified, freed from all thraldom and eternal, is the possession only of the sons of God. All lower forms of manhood are still under judgment and liable to corruption and death. And the law of all

life, which is the law of God, is that embodiment must be according to character. "Every one must receive in body according to the things that he hath done." So that room is left in this doctrine for all that Scripture teaches concerning God's inflexible hatred of sin, His law of harvest which requires that men must reap as they sow, and that the soul that sinneth it shall die. The warnings of Christ to men to escape the gehenna of fire are all explained. The eternal punishment is seen to be the eternal loss of this *present* gift of life, with all its rich endowments and possibilities,—with perhaps much of its personal self-consciousness. For Jesus teaches that a man may lose *himself.* And yet all this wreck of present life and manhood does not preclude the gift of another life, nor shut out these lost ones from the provision which God has made, after they have served out their death sentence, to take up their case again through a resurrection from the dead.

This solution is also freed from the objections which attend those above referred to. The Universalist would bring all men to eternal life without that patient continuance in well-doing by which alone it must be sought, and without that trial in manhood on the arena of which it can alone be won, and in disregard of that peril of a second death of which Scripture impressively speaks. The future probationist conceals from men the present peril to which they are exposed, by proposing a scheme of deferred judgment and delayed death sentence under which men may hope to escape the just consequences of their sins. Whereas the Bible warning is "After death, judgment." The door of hope which resurrection

provides will never open to any man until after the death-sentence of God's law has been visited upon him, and he has received of the Lord's hand double for all his sins. And then it will not introduce him to a second chance to recover what has been lost and lost forever. That second gift of life will bring its own responsibilities and hazards. It will not renew those that are gone forever.

And so, as superior to the solution of the conditionalist, while this doctrine accepts its first principle, that man out of Christ has no principle of eternal life, it maintains that the gift of another life is secured to all, and that the purpose of their resurrection cannot be merely to inflict upon them suffering and anguish, to be followed by another casting of them into the pit of death and hell. Not for any such wrathful end as this has God provided to raise out of death those who have been already the victims of His wrath. They may indeed prove unworthy of this renewed gift of life. They may come back so loaded with the weight of evil character as to make their lapse into the second death well nigh certain. But not for any such retributive purpose, but in the line of His redemptive working along His plan of the ages and in His secret realms of life, has He provided that all who died in Adam shall be made alive in Christ.

But even if we are unable to adjust this doctrine to all the difficulties that may present themselves to our minds or to all the "hard sayings" of Scripture, we are more and more persuaded of its essential truth, and that is God's own solution of the dark problems presented to

us in His word and in this system of the world. The more the light of this "hope toward God" shines in our hearts, the better shall we be able to understand the Scriptures, and to read also the secrets of creation and of human history. And the better shall we who are "the called according to His purpose" discern "what is the hope of our calling" as the brethren of Him who is "the first born from the dead," predestinated to be conformed to His image, and to take part with Him in those administrations of grace and of power, by which in the dispensation of the fulness of times He shall reconcile all things unto God, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

ARE THE DEAD CONSCIOUS?

This is not a question for man's philosophy or science to determine. They can only give us a conjecture. Science is here either dumb, or if it speaks at all, can only speak according to the light that prevails in the realm of things physical. The Word of God alone can speak with authority.

But even among those who acknowledge its authority, a class of readers tell us that it holds out no hope of conscious life for any man until the resurrection of the dead. And this event for all men they believe to be yet future. Abraham and David and Paul and St. John are alike resting among the dead and awaiting the summons of the angel's trump of resurrection to awaken them to

life and blessedness. In proof of this they appeal to such Old Testament passages as "The dead know not anything," and to the New Testament use of the word "sleep" as describing the condition of those who "sleep in Jesus." They argue also that no other meaning properly attaches to the word "dead" than this of complete loss of consciousness. They insist also that as man was created with body and soul, the dissolution of these destroys the man. He can be restored to life only as he is re-created at the resurrection.

The Bible speaks of the future of two classes of mankind, the saved in Christ, and the unsaved. With regard to the latter it is plain that it speaks of destruction as their portion, and that it often views this class of the dead as perished. And yet the New Testament makes it plain that this destruction is not complete with the death of the body. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is enough of itself to convince ordinary readers that the soul of the wicked man may survive the death of the body in conscious suffering. But Jesus teaches that the soul also may be destroyed in hell. Thispa rt of man's being, which is his conscious self, while it may survive and suffer long after death, may also perish. About nothing is the New Testament more emphatic than the possible loss of the soul, which, in St. Luke, is also defined as the man's loss of *himself*. There is at least a destruction *qua homo*.

There are frequent references in Scripture also to the spirit of man, an element of his being differing from both soul and body. Whether this spirit be a distinct personal entity, retaining self-consciousness apart

from the living soul with which it is conjoined, or whether it be an emanation from the immortal Spirit of God that animates this creature of His hands, and returns to Him who gave it when man dies, is not made plain. This spirit would seem, however, to retain within itself the nucleus or potentiality of the man's being. Otherwise we cannot conceive of his resurrection as possible. For resurrection cannot be the calling up again of that which was extinct. There would be nothing left to be raised.

The wicked dead are therefore conscious up to the time of the death of the soul. Then the sentence against man is fulfilled—"The soul that sinneth it shall die." Whether the spirit, now unclothed and void, retains the personal consciousness of the man who perished, is at least doubtful. As there has been a destruction out of the life and sphere of manhood we should infer that self-consciousness would go with it. This condition would seem to be the silence and outer darkness of Sheol, the prison of gloom, where the dead await resurrection.

With regard to the other class, there is every reason from Scripture to believe that they are not only conscious but blissfully so. Even the Old Testament saints were assured that God would preserve their souls alive through the crisis of death, and save them from going down to the pit. And the New Testament emphasizes this as the distinctive blessing of the righteous that, while the wicked man must lose his soul, their souls should be saved. We are sure that the continuity of the soul must carry with it the continuation of self-con

sciousness. The man is not destroyed whose soul is saved alive. Hence Jesus represents this class as having already passed from death unto life. He says of them they "shall never die." The epistles speak of them as already "risen with Christ." They have eternal life. It is impossible to believe that those of whom these verses are true can pass at death into a long period of suspended consciousness. It is said indeed of them that in death they "fall asleep" (Acts vii. 60). But this may be an expression accomodated to what transpires in the sphere of the senses, or the repose of the soul as contrasted with the activity which awaits it at the redemption of the body may be properly described as a sleep, without supposing that it is unconscious. Even natural sleep may be a period of happy visions. At all events, even if it be insisted that life and consciousness can be restored to the dead only through resurrection, we still fall back upon the fact that those who "have been made alive unto God through Jesus Christ" cannot so pass under the power of death. They are already "quickened", "raised." If the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2d Cor. v. 1). Away from their home in the body, they are in-homed with the Lord (vs. 8. Phil. i. 23). Our readers will remember what we have said upon former occasions of the soul—that, as distinct from "spirit," it belongs to the embodied side of man's nature. Where the soul is saved the man cannot be unclothed by death, and therefore cannot lose consciousness. It must find a home with the Lord who has redeemed it. It must have power to build for itself a

home in which to await its full glorification at the coming of the Lord. These various New Testament expressions are wholly inconsistent with the idea that all God's saints,—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of whom Jesus affirmed that they were now "living unto God,"—the devoted Paul, the beloved John, the noble army of martyrs, are all still sunk in a profound slumber of death, with no knowledge of, nor interest in, the progress of their Lord's kingdom for which they laid down their lives. Rather far would we say that the old idea that all the saints are to be raised together at one sudden burst of their Lord's glory must be relinquished, and believe that such saints are now living and reigning with Christ. If some saints came out of their graves at Christ's resurrection,—if He then led captivity—a multitude of captives—captive, why may we not suppose that His conquest over the realm of death is an ever advancing progress. It will be objected to this that the New Testament teaching is "They that are Christ's at His coming." Readers of the New Version have, however, observed that this word "coming" is always put in the margin as "presence." The whole teaching of our Lord in regard to His coming favors the thought that He does not "come" after a journey from a distant region, but through the manifestation of a presence always imminent. And so with the power of His resurrection. We are not required to believe that it will all be put forth at one final crisis. It was displayed when he was raised, in the recovery from death of some of the bodies of the saints (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53). It was the common view of Rev. xx. 4–6 among the early Christians, that martyred saints

came at once to their full triumph over death. We are persuaded that the full Scripture teaching upon these subjects will require us to believe either that the *anastasis* of the saints is in part anticipated before the complete redemption of the body, or that the revelation of their Lord's glory is made to them (His *paronsia*) in the order of their preparation to receive it. This would explain why such consecrated servants as Paul would always view the coming of their Lord as near, and why he speaks of "the crown of righteousness" which seems so near to him as laid up for "all those who love His appearing" (2 Tim. iv. 6–8). But whatever may be the full and final truth upon these points we are confident that the doctrine of the unconscious sleep of such earnest souls, and of the saints at large, until a distant resurrection, depreciates the gift of life which they now have in their risen Lord, dishonors His grace and power, and that it is based upon a very partial and incomplete understanding of His Word.

LIGHT ON OBSCURE TEXTS.

(John V. 29).

In the New Version the word "ill" is substituted for "evil"; and we read that "they that have done ill" shall come forth from the tombs unto "the resurrection of judgment." The word *phaulon*, as distinguished from *poneron*, is a less positive word for "evil." It implies a kind of ill-doing which results from carelessness. It

brings to view worthlessness in conduct, rather than positive wickedness. The question therefore is suggested whether this passage was intended to draw a sharp line between Christians and unbelievers, as the only two classes referred to, as if believers in Christ were necessarily all on one side as doers of good. We are taught in the New Testament that some of them may do ill, and the results of their life work prove worthless. As for example:

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire. (1 Cor. iii. 11–15).

It is further written of Christians. "For *we* must all be made manifest before the Judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things through the body, according to what he hath done, whether good or bad." These passages seem to teach that unfaithful Christians may also come forth to a resurrection of judgment. And this implies that not all who receive this resurrection are hopelessly damned. For these at least "shall be saved, yet so as through fire."

At no point do the ideas of Christians need to be clarified more than in the confused way in which they treat passages of warning and threatened judgment addressed to them as if they were meant solely for their unbelieving neighbors. The warning words in the Book

of Hebrews, for example, every one of which applies to them, they constantly quote as describing the future punishment of unbelievers. We think it would be a most salutary exercise for us to reflect whether this principle of a "resurrection of judgment" for them that do ill may contain no "terror of the Lord" for us.

THE CHURCH AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

We clip the following from *Messiah's Herald.* The writer is a well-known Presbyterian minister, the Rev. J. B. Dunn, D.D. It confirms what we have frequently said, that the church is deceiving herself in regard to her progress in this work, and so blinding herself to the obligation put upon her by her Lord to find her way out of the confusion of this divided state, in order that the world may believe. So long as she refuses this duty, and presents the disgraceful spectacle of rival sects contending for supremacy, even before the heathen she seeks to save, so long her Lord must refuse to fill her with His life and power; and she will continue to be put to shame before her foes.

For some time back the religious press has been commenting upon the increased interest in Foreign Missions on the part of those attending theological seminaries and colleges; and now the President of Princeton tells us, that 1,528 students from ninety-two institutions of learning, representing different denominations, have "declared themselves willing and desirous, God permitting, to be foreign missionaries."

In making this statement Dr. McCosh asks, "Has any such offer of living young men and women been presented in our age or in our country; in any age or in any country since the day of Pentecost?"

Take this unprecedented uprising of consecrated young manhood and womanhood on the one hand, and the Macedonian cries that come up from every pagan shore—the white harvest fields that greet the eye wheresoever we turn—on the other, and we have the summons of the Lord of the harvest to his Church.

To answer this providential call—to bring these fields and these men and women together—the Christians of America have got to bestir themselves with their gifts to an extent they have not as yet attained. The rate of supplies now furnished Mission Boards is barely adequate for conducting the various missionary enterprises on their present scale. Last year the wealthiest missionary society of this country—that in connection with the Presbyterian church, to make good the losses by death, withdrawal and marriage, commisioned seven ordained missionaries, six of whom were married; eight medical missionaries, two of whom were ladies; and eleven unmarried ladies—*a gain of but two.*

The missionary organ of the wealthy Protestant Episcopal church, in a recent number says. "Our mission work is always crippled for lack of means. It is a source of anxiety to secure sufficient contributions from year to year to meet the meagre promises which the Board ventures to make for work already begun, and there is no margin to enlarge the work."

Similar statements are from time to time made by the missionary societies of other denominations. The real truth is, the exchequers of nearly all missionary boards are in a state of chronic exhaustion, and the cry of distress from those in office seldom ceases, and only ceases for a brief season to burst forth in more pitiful and piercing tones. Some one has said, that "the normal condition of many of our missionary societies, great and small, is that of ships in perpetual danger of being stranded for lack of an adequate tide of pecuniary

means to float them. Occasionally they get aground, and after vast efforts they move freely; but the water beneath them is alarmingly shallow." Yet no one will dare to say that the Church's work has consumed the Church's wealth; that its piety has exhausted its purse. The Christian world is not bankrupt. It has untold resources at its command. It is rich, very rich, in material wealth.

While, then, the millions of professing Christians in America—thousands of whom God hath endowed with the wealth of this world—are burdened with the question whether they can send out a score or two new men to preach the glorious saving gospel of the ever blessed Jesus, the little African State of Tripoli, in Barbary, is sending from its Mahommedan College one thousand young missionaries every year into Africa to disseminate the miserable, soul-destroying errors of the false prophet! And the great Ayar in Cairo, with 10,000 students, sends to the Moslem mission fields not less than 2,000 a year. How these men shame us by their zeal in their faith! Little Tripoli on the one side, and the great United States of America on the other! Mahommedanism, thriftless, threadbare, and living upon a crust, upon the one side, and the affluent and luxurious Christian church of America on the other! Little Tripoli a thousand for Africa; great America a score, more or less! How significant that remark of a Methodist bishop: "The question now is not so much whether the heathen can be saved without the gospel, as whether we can be saved if we fail to give it to them."

But America is by no means inactive in the work of missions in Africa, for while it can scarce send a score of men to bless the dark sons of that continent with the gospel, it can, and it does send every year well nigh on to a million of gallons of *rum* to curse its inhabitants. So that for every African who is influenced for good by Christianity, thousands are driven into deeper degradation by the rum traffic, and unless something is done to stay the tide of devastation now sweeping over that country, the indications are that ere long that continent, which Victor Hugo predicted would be the scene

of the greatest advance in the twentieth century, will be under the domination of the rum traffic! O, ye blood-bought sons of the blessed Christ, listen to the testimony of Kama: "*The white man must stop giving us brandy if he wishes to save us.*" Give heed to the touching appeal recently sent to Bishop Crowther of the Church Missionary Society by the Mahommedan King Maliki, of Nupi (in the Niger region): "Rum, rum, rum! It has ruined our country; it has ruined our people very much; it has made our people become mad . . beg the English Queen to prevent bringing rum into this land. For God and the prophet's sake, you must help us in this matter. You must not leave our country to be spoiled by rum."

Dr. Dunn in the above article puts great stress upon the lack of money given by the Church to carry on this work. He fails, however, to perceive the evil which lies back of this, and which we have indicated above. A church that does not realize the unity of all believers as members in the one body of the one Christ, and that does not conform its organization and methods of work to this leading idea of its very being, will never call forth the sacrifices to any great degree of its members. And this, because He cannot pervade an organism, the members of which are disjointed and dissevered, with His powerful presence, nor can He reveal the full measure of His truth to such a church. Accordingly, we find the church of to-day not only distracted by divisions in the presence of her enemies, but bewildered by diverse views concerning even the fundamentals of her faith, and especially in regard to God's purposes toward mankind in the gospel of His grace, and her own place under His great plan. She has yet to learn the full meaning of that gospel her Lord commanded her to preach in all the world.

There are great truths that pitch their shining tents
Outside our walls, and though but dimly seen
In the grey dawn, they will be manifest
When the light widens into perfect day. —*Longfellow.*

" 'Take thou no thought for aught save truth and right,
Content, if such thy fate, to die obscure ;
Wealth palls and honors ; fame may not endure,
And noble souls soon weary of delight.
Keep innocence: be all a true man ought,
Let neither pleasure tempt nor pain appal.
Who hath this, he hath all things having naught,
Who hath it not, hath nothing having all.' "

NOTES ON CURRENT OPINIONS AND EVENTS.

Our Difference.—We have been requested to state concisely the points at which the teachings of this magazine differ from those of the Westminster Standards upon the question of man's destiny.

There is but one vital point. The other points grow out of this one and are subordinate to it. It is only necessary therefore to direct our reply to this initial point.

Our Standards teach that for the sins of this life the souls of wicked men are, at death, cast into the torments of hell, where they remain until the resurrection,—that they are then reunited to their bodies, arrayed before the judgment seat of Christ, and the restored man driven from thence back to hell to suffer most grievous and unspeakable torments, without intermission, in both body and soul, with the devil and his angels in hell-fire forever. (Chap. xxxiii. Sec. 2. Questions 29, 89, Large Catechism.)

That this teaching does not fairly reflect the character and purposes of God, nor harmonize with the voice of His Spirit as

uttered in the hearts of His children and in His Word, is seen in the fact that those who are under the highest obligations to warn their fellow-men to flee from the wrath to come are restrained from using these statements by an inward protest.

We have, therefore, in the interest of honest dealing by the Church in her solemn testimonies from God to men, raised the question whether the framers of this part of our Confession have not made a serious mistake. From a careful study of Scripture we believe they have, and that we are able to point out precisely where they erred

While they have been faithful to the Scripture teaching about the sinner's danger of being cast into hell, they have misconceived the meaning and place of resurrection in the divine economy. They make it to be a retributive act; whereas the Scriptures make it to be due to the redeeming work of Christ. They make this provision a curse to all but the elect. Whereas, it is a boon to the race. It comes in fulfiilment of blessing secured to all the families of the earth by a chosen seed. Without it many specific promises of future blessing to Israel and mankind found in the Old Testament must remain unfulfilled.

This promise, however, we have held, is not to eternal life It does not set aside the operation of the universal law, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." It does not prevent the harvest of corruption which they must reap who sow to the flesh. It secures to the unjust only a "resurrection of judgment," by which we understand that the results of evil character must impress themselves upon the bodily forms in which men are raised, and bring them again under judicial trial and correction, leaving them liable to the second death.

About the inferences we have drawn from this principle we are not so sure as of the truth of the principle itself. It is a simple assertion, derived from the comprehensive teaching of Scripture con cerning death as the wages of sin, and concerning resurrection, that the provision to confer upon all who lost life in Adam another life in Christ is a gracious provision, and not, as our Standards present it, one by which the punishment of the lost is greatly enhanced, and their existence perpetuated for endless torment. If this principle is wrong and unscriptural, then, of course, our offense is grievous. If it be true, then are we rendering the truest service to the

Church in calling her attention to it, and in urging her to amend her statements so that in a matter of such fearful import they shall be in all respects conformed to the Word of God.

THE AMERICAN BOARD.—It is becoming increasingly apparent from the tone of *The Independent*, and the party in the Congregational Church of which it is the mouth-piece, that there is great danger of a schism in that church, and of a rupture of the Board. Great pity, this, when the doctrine of redemption through resurrection furnishes to both parties a framework in which both sides of Scripture truth concerning the future of the heathen fit into their proper place. Would that they could both see the truth of this "word of reconcilation"

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.—We find in an exchange the following remarks upon this scene taken from a sermon by the Rev. Dr. W. M. Taylor:

There is further revealed here the eternity of the duration of the punishment. I cannot see how else the fixity of that gulf is to be understood. It is as true that no change of place is possible to those who are here described, as it is that, if Moses and the prophets be not heard, the mission of one from the dead will be in vain. For both of these announcements stand on the same plane. I know that it is said that this is Hades—the state of disembodied spirits—intervening between this life and the general resurrection and judgment. Be it so. I accept the representation. But that completely explodes the modern notion of Dorner and others, that probation continues through the state, and is only terminated at the resurrection and the final judgment. For how can there be probation, with this impossibility of passing from one place to the other? There is here no possible probation in the intermediate state; and there is not a single word in all the Scriptures which indicates that there will be probation after the judgment—not one. That ought to be enough, and with that I leave the subject to stand before you in its own dread and awful solemnity.

Dr. Taylor's comment is right in that he perceives that this passage excludes the Dorner and Andover notion that there is an intermediate state of probation before judgment and punishment.

His error consists in the assumption that this judgment takes place, with consequent punishment, after resurrection. Whereas it is apparent upon the face of the narrative that the rich man passed at once into hell—the place of punishment. The fact that the original word here is *hades* does not alter the fact, that it was a place of anguish, of torment and of flame. If this be not the sinner's hell, what is it? But if Dives had passed into the place and state of punishment he must have been judged. And yet Dr. Taylor assumes that he is yet to be judged and punished. It is this unscriptural figment of a remote general assize to which final judgment is postponed, that has introduced such confusion into our modern eschatology. What a monstrous incongruity this!—that God sends men into the torments of hell, and then brings them out to be judged and sent back again. And yet if this parable teaches anything it teaches that judgment is immediate. The whole trouble lies in the wrong idea that has fastened itself upon the church with respect to the purpose and effect of resurrection. She has been betrayed into conceiving of it as the prelude to final *retribution* Whereas it is of the very essence of it that it is recovery from death---the wages of sin. All Scripture is belied if resurrection does not belong to the *redemptive* side of God's working. From this point of view the parable of the rich man and Lazarus admits of easy explanation. There was no possible relief for him during the whole hadean period. His was a lost soul, vanishing into the darkness of an age-long destruction, from the light and life and blessedness of the saved. But even from that outer darkness, resurrection must sometime reach and recover him. What effect this change will work in his condition and prospects is not alluded to in the parable. But it is, from other Scriptures, a legitimate subject of inquiry. The vital mistake in all such remarks as those above quoted is that a representation of punishment in hell which, upon the face of it, precedes resurrection, is treated as if it did not describe the real punishment of sin,—as if that awaits a distant future judgment, and as if resurrection, which is essentially a lifting out of death and hell, had no other meaning for the sinner than as a way of casting him back into a deeper hell for the double torment of both body and soul. Is this all the grace there is in God's provision that "as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order?"

We agree therefore with Dr. Taylor in holding that no possibl future probation can provide the sinner a way of escape from the just punishment of his sins It is inevitable. "There is not a single word in all the Scriptures that there will be probation after judgment—not one." He must lose his present life. His soul even may, perhaps must, be destroyed with his body in hell. But how about a second gift of embodied life at the resurrection? Will tha bring no possibilities of good? If so, why is it bestowed?

A Freak of Criticism.—A critic who makes use of the columns of a public journal to speak of another man's teaching, ought to take some pains to represent it aright. The Rev. Luther Dodd, of Fort Dodge, Iowa, in a recent communication to the *Presbyterian Journal* of Sept. 22d upon the topic of "Conditional Immortality,' speaks of "Mr Baker's doctrine" in a way that would lead us to suppose he had never read anything that we have written. He is writing to disprove the notion that the wicked do not consciously exist and suffer after death, and after their consignment to hell. This notion we have repudiated a score of times in this magazine ; and we have appealed to the same Scriptures that Mr. Dodd uses—the parable of Dives and Lazarus and other passages—to show the falsity of this opinion. And yet he assumes that we have taught the very opposite. We have indeed expressed sympathy with the conclusion to which such thoughtful writers as Prof. Drummond, Prof. Harris and Prebendary Row, point in their recent works, that no life alienated from the life of God can be as eternal as His own. But this is a very different conclusion from the gross view this critic combats that such an existence is ended at death. It is enough to make one despair of Christians ever being able to arrive at a common understanding of what God's Word teaches, to read such undiscriminating criticism as this.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

In reference to the Rev. Dr. Henry M. Field's letter to R. M. Ingersoll, published in the *North American Review* and in the *New York Evangelist*, a correspondent sends us the following :

"I have just read Dr. Field's letter to Ingersoll, and while it is for the most part able and forceful, it looks as though the writer himself felt the weakness of the part devoted to the consideration of the 'Immortality of the Soul' and 'Future Retribution.' But what is strange, he has *nothing* at all to say of *resurrection*, but finds '*all* the *conditions* of *retribution*' in the state of the *disembodied spirit*, with the moral sense quickened as never before, *i.e.*, in the remorseful memories of the life of sin. With the *more Scriptural* and *rational* view maintained in your pages, Dr. Field might have knocked away every prop from Ingersoll's infidelity. I should be glad to see such a review as you would write, and to have Ingersoll see it, too."

We have from time to time sent copies of this magazine to missionaries in foreign lands whose names have fallen under our notice. No other class of laborers in the Lord's harvest stand more in need of the enlightening and stimulating truths to which it has borne witness. The theory upon which Foreign Missions have been conducted,—that all the heathen of past and present generations are doomed to endless misery, has waxed old and is ready to vanish away. The Future Probationists are meanwhile feeling in the dark after a truer view of God's purposes towards mankind, if haply they may find it. Strange to say both of these schools seem blind to the light which the doctrine of an universal resurrection sheds upon this great question. In nothing has the adversary obscured the truth as to God's great plan more than in the matter of this "hope toward God." Even the *Andover Review* can publish long dissertations upon this topic in which there is not a single allusion to "the resurrection of the unjust," and its bearing upon the problem to which it furnishes the only key. Any one who reads the account of Paul's missionary addresses, and his subsequent letters to his converts, will see that he did not go to the Gentiles under any such awful burden as our modern missionaries have been sent. And he will see that the purpose of God in gathering a chosen seed out of all kindreds and tongues was not simply that these few might be saved, but that, in ages to come, they might take part with Christ in extending His triumph over even the regions of the dead. This gospel of the resurrection brought not only its special hope to those who embraced it, but contained within it a hope for their kindred among the dead, for whom they were now called to take the firstborn's place of sacrifice and service. It is not until this larger view of the purpose of God in visit-

ing the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv., 14), is grasped, that the church at home, or Foreign Missionaries abroad, can fairly understand the nature of their work, or the full meaning of that gospel with which they are put in trust.

For these reasons we have been at some pains to send copies of this magazine to preachers of the gospel in foreign lands. We give below an appeal just received from one of this class.

MONASTIR, MACEDONIA,
EUROPEAN TURKEY.

Beloved Brother in Christ the Hope of Glory: With greeting and Christian salutation I come to you to thank you for the kindness and love of sending to me "THE WORDS OF RECONCILIATION" in this far off land of Macedonia, from where the ancient cry came, and it comes in greater force to-day: "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

I am a man of Macedonia, born and converted to God in the same land, and expect once more to be born in this, my native land, at the coming of Jesus, when this mortal shall put on immortality and when we shall be like Him—with glorified bodies like unto His—and then we shall never die nor mourn. Then we can be immortal; but not till then. I bless God for this hope, for it is good, living, sure, steadfast, blessed and it makes us not ashamed, but makes us to triumph over difficulties and fight the good fight of faith bravely till he comes. I praise God for the light and truth given to me, and that he raised me to proclaim the same truth again in this forsaken land of Macedonia. I say forsaken for none took care from America or England to bring us the light of heaven, while my people are standing in the dark and are crying "Where is the good way of light and life that we may walk in it."

Nevertheless that we have not laborers, still God loves Macedonia, and He will raise laborers who will proclaim the truth in mighty power. Let His will be done, not ours. We will wait till he gives us the desire of our hearts. At present, I am the only one who dared to preach the truth once delivered to the saints and I passed through a great many trials and sufferings till I got a little flock; this little one is my joy and comfort—for this little flock since I started my mission, my flesh had no rest, but I had trouble on every side; and in such a time the Lord with His comforting power was on every side to help me and strengthen me to go on bravely and preach the truth, and I found His grace was sufficient for me in every time of trouble, and the throne of Grace nearer, where I could have communion and fellowship with Him who is above all, in all, and for all.

I started my mission without any support from any society; but faith in God and trust daily for our living in Him, and my work has been to do His will in all things, to please him in all

things, to preach the truth as it is in Jesus, to praise Him for all things done for me and in me.

Now let me tell you that the people of Macedonia love to hear the truth, they search the Scriptures, they seek for light and life; their need is great, help is greatly needed, workers are wanted! Who can come over and help us? Who is ready to say from the bottom of his or her heart, Here am I, Lord, send me. Oh, brethren, sustain our hands, heed to our cry and God shall bless us all far and near.

Brother, sister, a cry comes to you
From an ancient, far-off land,
'Tis from sighing Macedonia:—
Can you send a helping hand
To prepare us
That we may before Christ stand.
Oh, brethren, forget not the cry! (Act. xvi., 9.)

If I had a few workers from America I would find work for them to do from morning till evening; but, oh, where are they? May God, discover them and send them to us! Our hearts desire to see His work prosper. For this I suffer, for this I become poor with the goods of this world, for this I am working, for this I am persecuted, for this I am praying, and by His grace we will go on till he comes to save us completely and be with Him forever in the kingdom to come. Pray for us. Our Macedonian brethren salute you all. With fervent love and regards to you and to all far and near, I am yours in Christ, BASIL STEPHANOFF.

P.S.—If you can afford, please supply me with the bound volumes of the "Words of Reconciliation" and also with the past numbers of 1887. I will greatly prize them and use them in my work.

Any help sent to me will be used for the glory of God. Money can be sent through Pastor E. M. Andrews, Chelsea, Mass., United States of America; or, if you prefer, send direct to me through the "*London Bank*," little or much, for our need is great.

AN intelligent Presbyterian layman writes, "I read WORDS OF RECONCILIATION every month with the utmost interest and profit, and shall send my copy every month to friends abroad. My last subscription was paid some time ago and I do not know whether I am now in your debt or not. Would it not be a good idea to indicate subscriptions due by a colored wrapper? Enclosed please find my check for $2 50, for which I will thank you to send volumes I. and II., and the magazine for as long as it will be due.